

Remarks/Arguments

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed September 1, 2005. Claims 1-4, 8-18 and 21-32 are pending in this case. Claims 1-4, 8-18 and 21-32 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 30-32 have herein been amended. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Adequate descriptive support for the present Amendment should be apparent throughout the originally filed disclosure as, for example, the depicted embodiments and related discussion thereof in the written description of the specification. Claims 2, 4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 21-29 remain unchanged.

It is noted that solely for clarification purposes, Claims 1, 8 and 13 have been amended to recite that both the mailing pieces and the mailing statement are submitted to the postal service facility. Similarly, Claims 10 and 16 have been amended for clarification purposes to recite the generally synonymous terms meter imprint, digital postage mark or indicia.

Applicants acknowledge that the previous notice of allowance has been withdrawn in view of newly discovered references. However, for the following reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims set forth herein are allowable over these newly cited references.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lee et al. (US 6,430,543). For the following reasons, the 102(b) rejection is respectfully traversed.

Lee et al. does not disclose the same steps as Claim 1, and thus does not anticipate Claim 1 under the law pertaining to 35 U.S.C. §102 ("identity of invention"). For example, Lee et al. does not produce a first tracing code on each of the plurality of mail pieces. Instead, Lee et al. produces unique indicia data for each mail piece, i.e., a first unique code on the first mail piece, a second unique code on the second mail piece, a third unique code on the third mail piece, etc. Applicants' mail pieces only have one code, i.e., the "first tracing code."

Further, while Lee et al. does create a mailing statement 122, Lee et al. does not provide a second tracing code on the mailing statement, as claimed in Applicants' Claim 1. The Examiner attempts to equate a separate manifest 136 produced by Lee et al. to Applicants' mailing statement. This cannot properly be done as it is a completely separate document used for a separate purpose, as discussed in Lee et al. (See, e.g., Column 3, lines 26-39). Applicants' method and system does not even have anything remotely similar to the manifest 136 in Lee et al. The manifest 136 in Lee et al. does not anticipate Applicants' claimed mailing statement having

a second tracing code thereon.

Still further, Lee et al. does not verify that a first tracing code on the mail pieces corresponds to a second tracing code on a mailing statement. Again, Lee et al. does not have first tracing code on all of the mail pieces, nor a second tracing code on the mailing statement.

Accordingly, Lee et al. does not anticipate Applicants' Claim 1 under the law pertaining to 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Applicants respectfully assert that Claim 1 is allowable over Lee et al. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 12-14, 16, 17 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. in view of Sansone et al. (US 5,925,864). For the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The proposed combination does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 2-4, 12-14, 16, 17 and 19. Sansone et al. fails to make up for the above identified deficiencies Lee et al. As such, the proposed combination of Lee et al. and Sansone et al. fails to teach, suggest or disclose Applicant's claimed method(s).

Specifically, with respect to Claim 2, as discussed above, Lee et al. fails to teach or disclose providing a first tracing code on the mail pieces, providing a second tracing code on the mailing

statement, and verifying that the first tracing code corresponds to the second tracing code. Further, Lee et al. does not teach or suggest scanning the mailing statement to read a second tracing code. Sansone et al. does not make up for these deficiencies, and as such, the proposed combination fails to make these claimed limitations obvious.

Sansone et al. discloses a system for metering incoming deliverable mail to automatically enable address correction. Sansone et al. does not disclose, and is not concerned with, verifying that a first tracing code on the mail pieces corresponds to a second tracing code on the mailing statement. Further, as discussed in Column 3, lines 45-58, Sansone et al. scans the address field 9 and return address field 8 of mail piece 10, and uses this information to create its tracking code 7. Sansone et al., and thus the proposed combination, does not scan the mailing statement to read a second tracing code, as in Claim 2. As such, the proposed combination of Lee et al. and Sansone et al. fails to make obvious Applicants' Claim 2.

With respect to Claim 3, Applicants' have amended Claim 3 to claim that the first tracing code corresponds to characteristics of the mail piece, in addition to the Claim 1 limitation that the first tracing code corresponds to the source of the mail pieces. It is

respectfully submitted that the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose this limitation of amended Claim 3.

With respect to Claim 4, the mail piece code in both Lee et al. and Sansone et al. is an alphanumeric code printed in the meter imprint (digital postage mark or indicia) (See Lee et al. Figure 4 and Sansone et al. Figures 3-5). As such, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose that a first tracing code is embedded into a digital image, a text, a watermark paper fibers or invisible ink.

With respect to Claim 12, for the above discussed reasons, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose the steps of providing an encrypted source tracing code on each of the plurality of mail pieces via source tracing code producing equipment; scanning each of the plurality of mail pieces to read the encrypted source tracing code; verifying that the encrypted source tracing code corresponds to a source of the mail pieces; and creating a mailing statement for the plurality of mail pieces via mailing statement producing equipment, the mailing statement including a corresponding source tracing code corresponding to the encrypted source tracing code on each of the plurality of mail pieces.

With respect to Claim 13, for the above discussed reasons, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose the steps of

scanning the mailing statement to read the corresponding source tracing code; scanning at least a sampling of the plurality of mail pieces to read the encrypted source tracing code; and verifying that the encrypted source tracing code corresponds to the corresponding source tracing code.

With respect to Claim 14, for the reasons discussed above, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose that the encrypted source tracing is embedded into a digital image, a text, a watermark paper fibers or invisible ink.

With respect to amended Claim 16, since both Lee et al.'s and Sansone et al.'s code is part of the meter imprint (digital postage mark or indicia) as discussed above, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose that the encrypted source tracing code is independent from a meter imprint, digital postage mark or indicia.

With respect to Claims 17 and 29, neither Lee et al. nor Sansone et al. teach, suggest or disclose, and thus the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose, providing an alert indication when the tracing code does not correspond to the corresponding tracing code.

Accordingly, Lee et al. in view of Sansone et al. does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 2-4, 12-14, 16, 17 and 19 under the law pertaining to 35 U.S.C. 103. Applicants respectfully assert that

Claims 2-4, 12-14, 16, 17 and 19 are allowable over the proposed combination. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 8-11, 18, 21-26 and 29-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. in view of Scolley et al. (US 6,003,010). For the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The proposed combination does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 8-11, 18, 21-26 and 29-32. Scolley et al. fails to make up for the above identified deficiencies Lee et al. As such, the proposed combination of Lee et al. and Scolley et al. fails to teach, suggest or disclose Applicant's claimed method(s).

Specifically, with respect to Claims 8 and 24, as discussed above, Lee et al. fails to teach or disclose providing a first tracing code on the mail pieces corresponding the source of the mail pieces, and providing a second tracing code on the mailing statement also corresponding to the source of the mail pieces. Further, Lee et al. does not teach or suggest capturing and recording an identity of an individual submitting said plurality of mail pieces. Scolley et al. does not make up for these deficiencies, and as such, the proposed combination fails to make these claimed limitations obvious. Scolley et al. is concerned with improved airborne transportation of small packages. Scolley et al. does not disclose, and is not

concerned with, a first tracing code on mail pieces and a second tracing code on a mailing statement. As such, the proposed combination of Lee et al. and Scolley et al. fails to make obvious Applicants' Claims 8 and 24.

With respect to Claim 9, the proposed combination does not teach, suggest or disclose passing the mail pieces through tracing code producing equipment. In Lee et al., the mail piece code is printed by the digital postage mark printer, not by specific tracing code producing equipment.

With respect to Claim 10, the proposed combination does not teach, suggest or disclose that the first tracing code is independent from a meter imprint, digital postage mark or indicia. In Lee et al., the mail piece code is part of the meter imprint (digital postage mark or indicia).

With respect to Claims 11, neither Lee et al. nor Scolley et al. teach, suggest or disclose, and thus the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose, providing an alert indication when the first tracing code does not correspond to the second tracing code.

With respect to Claims 18, 21 and 22, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose providing a source tracing code on the at least one mail piece via source tracing code producing equipment, after the at least one mail piece has been submitted to

the postal facility. The Examiner has failed to establish that the applied references disclose each feature of independent Claim 18 by failing to identify where the corresponding elements are disclosed in the applied references.

With respect to Claims 23 and 25, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose using the source tracing code to trace the mail piece back to the individual.

With respect to Claims 26 and 29, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose tracing the first or second tracing code back to the source to determine why the two codes do not correspond.

With respect to amended Claim 30, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose providing an encrypted tracing code on at least one envelope (as opposed to mail piece); providing the at least one envelope to a mailer to create at least one mail piece; recording the identity of the mailer in association with the tracing code; and reading the tracing code on the at least one mail piece to verify the source of the envelope. By providing the encrypted tracing code on an envelope prior to providing the envelope to the mailer for the production of the mail piece, individuals or businesses can obtain secure, personalized envelopes as discussed for example starting at line 17 of page 10 of the present application.

It is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination does not teach, suggest or disclose such a novel and unobvious method as claimed in independent Claim 30.

With respect to amended Claim 31, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose using the tracing code to trace the mail piece back to the individual.

With respect to amended Claims 32, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose tracing the tracing code back to the mailer when the source of the mail piece cannot be verified.

Accordingly, Lee et al. in view of Scolley et al. does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 8-11, 18, 21-26 and 29-32 under the law pertaining to 35 U.S.C. 103. Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 28-11, 18, 21-26 and 29-32 are allowable over the proposed combination. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 15 and 27-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. as modified by Sansone et al. as applied to Claim 12, and further in view of Scolley et al. For the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

The proposed combination does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 15 and 27-28. Scolley et al. fails to make up for the above identified deficiencies of Lee et al. as modified by Sansone et al.

As such, the proposed combination of Lee et al., Sansone et al. and Scolley et al. fails to teach, suggest or disclose Applicants' claimed method(s) for the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 12. Further, with respect to Claim 28, the proposed combination fails to teach, suggest or disclose storing a tracing code in association with the recorded identity of the individual, and using the tracing code to trace the mail piece back to the individual.

Accordingly, Lee et al. as modified by Sansone et al. and further in view of Scolley et al. does not make obvious Applicants' Claims 15 and 27-28 under the law pertaining to 35 U.S.C. 103. Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 15 and 27-28 are allowable over the proposed combination. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the prior art of record, either alone or in combination, fairly teaches, suggests or discloses the novel and unobvious features of Applicants' claims as set forth herein. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that all of the claims as presented herein are now in condition for immediate allowance. An early notice allowance is respectfully requested.

Any arguments of the Examiner not specifically addressed should not be deemed admitted, conceded, waived, or acquiesced by Applicants. Any additional or outstanding matters the Examiner may have are respectfully requested to be disposed of by telephoning the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required to Deposit Account No. 16-0657.

A postcard is enclosed evidencing receipt of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

**PATULA & ASSOCIATES, P.C.**



Charles T. Riggs Jr.  
Reg. No. 37,430  
Attorney for Applicants

PATULA & ASSOCIATES, P.C.  
116 S. Michigan Ave., 14th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60603  
(312) 201-8220

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